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Usability Objectives Pros & Cons

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The purpose of this document is to outline the benefits and challenges of each usability objective so that the Steering Committee is able to have a meaningful discussion about which objectives are appropriate for the eWiSACWIS program. The pros and cons outlined below are based on generally accepted usability principles. Identifying usability objectives should be made in the context of the overall strategy for the program. In order to have a clear understanding of the impact adopting selected usability objectives would have, additional study will be required.

Objective	Pros	Cons
Learnability Users are able to learn the system within an acceptable timeframe and gain knowledge about deeper functionality over time	▪ Users are able to become productive quickly ▪ The impact of turnover impact could be decreased ▪ Fewer resources have to be invested in training ▪ Users who know the system don't have to spend their time training new users ▪ Training resources can be invested in different types of training (i.e., policy, professional development) ▪ Fewer help desk/support calls (each help desk call typically costs $4-$10)	▪ There would need to be extensive revisions to the existing user interface to enhance learnability of the system ▪ Sometimes, learnable systems are not very efficient and super users get tired of going through tasks step-by-step. This can be avoided with "opt-out" features, but may still be an issue
Efficiency The resources consumed to achieve those goals are at an acceptable and accurate level	▪ Users are able to achieve their work goals faster ▪ Less time spent in the system resulting in more time for other activities viewed as more valuable	▪ There would need to be extensive revisions to the existing user interface to enhance efficiency ▪ A key issue to enhancing efficiency would be to ensure that users entered data only once in the system. The scope of this effort is unknown at this time. ▪ A key issue to enhancing efficiency is the ability for users to efficiently find things in the system. This may mean implementing different search technology, which is a significant undertaking ▪ Making an interface efficient sometimes results in it being less learnable
Effectiveness	▪ The system would support the goals of the program	▪ The system may not support work as it is being

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Users achieve the *right* goals they set out to achieve in the system	▪ There would need to be ongoing discussions on appropriate outcomes, how the system supported them and how they were measured ▪ There may be opportunities to drive process changes through the existing system without having it affect users (i.e., information collected "behind the scenes.")	done in the "real world." ▪ If users don't understand the policy behind the tool, it could be more difficult to use ▪ There would need to be ongoing discussions on appropriate outcomes, how the system supported them and how they were measured ▪ Major policy shifts could mean major system changes ▪ It is ineffective to use a system to drive process changes
Memorability Users can return from a break and still know where they are in the system and how to use it	▪ Decreased "cognitive load" for users	▪ Some of the methods used to make a site more memorable could be perceived as adding clutter to the user interface (i.e., tool tips, additional text to explain where a user is in the process) ▪ Memorability may not be as important if users are in the system during a significant portion of their day; it's helpful for infrequent or casual users
Error Handling & Recovery The system limits the errors a user encounters and helps them recover from them when they occur	▪ More accurate data entered into the system ▪ Errors could be avoided before saving them to the system ▪ Users would not be as stressed or frustrated when they made an error	▪ Would need to carefully consider the process and implications of allowing users to edit/revise work
Engaging Users feel positive about the system; the system draws users into it	▪ Users would enjoy using the system more ▪ Users could have a more positive attitude about the system	▪ Making a system engaging may not be as important when users are required to use a tool as part of their job
Flexibility Sites/groups have the ability to customize the system (within established constraints) to accommodate differences	▪ There would be the ability to customize the system within established constraints to better meet the needs of a particular group. This could reduce some of the resistance to tool adoption	▪ Each group would need to have the technical skills to customize the tool ▪ Each system would be slightly different, thus making support more difficult ▪ There may be issues with

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	- The ability to customize the tool could mean more efficiency for groups of users	complying with established government standards of being on a "single system." - It may be difficult to support a system that has been tailored to the specific groups of users
Tailorability Individual users have the ability to customize the user interface to accommodate their specific work responsibilities and priorities	- Individual users would be able to only display the features/functionality that they need to get their work done (i.e., only display Access features/ functionality)	- It may be difficult to support a system that has been tailored to the individual user - There will always be a percentage of users who will not tailor an interface, thus limiting the impact of this objective